

# Supervisor Romaine and Councilwoman Kept Announce Partnership with the Friends of Bellport Bay

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Councilwoman Kept speaks with Tom Schultz, co-founder of FoBB, and Tom Carrano of the Town's Division of Environmental Protection by the Bellport Bay



(L to R) Tom Carrano, Division of Environmental Protection, former Bellport Village Mayor David Pate, Councilwoman Connie Kept, Katia Read of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Tom Schultz, and Supervisor Ed Romaine

**Farmingville, NY** - Supervisor Ed Romaine and Councilwoman Connie Kept have announced plans for the Town to partner with the Friends of Bellport Bay (FoBB), a newly-formed group whose mission is to improve the water quality of the Bellport Bay. A resolution to authorize an agreement with the Bellport Village Program Fund, the not-for-profit corporation that sponsors the Friends of Bellport Bay, for a shellfish restoration program will be voted on by the Town Board. The agreement authorizes the Friends of Bellport Bay to work as an ancillary program to the Town's Shellfish Mariculture Program, which grows juvenile oysters, hard clams, and important shellfish species for population enhancement in Town of Brookhaven waters. As part of the agreement, the Town's Division of Environmental Protection will provide a maximum of 100,000 seed oysters, or spat, per year to the group to plant in Bellport Bay.

The restoration of shellfish populations is strongly encouraged as a method to strengthen ecosystems because shellfish, such as oysters, provide water quality maintenance by filtering nitrogen and particulates from the water. In addition, oysters provide shoreline protection, sediment stabilization, and habitats for other organisms.

"Bellport Bay is one of our most important waterways and the Town is committed to do whatever we can to preserve and protect it," said Supervisor Romaine. "Our shellfish restoration program will have a positive long lasting affect and thanks to the Friends of Bellport Bay and our Division of Environmental Protection, future generations will be able to enjoy a cleaner, more environmentally stable bay."

"I am happy that the Town will be partnering with the Friends of Bellport Bay in an effort to strengthen the water quality of the bay," stated Councilwoman Connie Kept. "I look forward to continuing to work with FoBB to improve and fortify the conditions of the bay in a sustainable way for future generations to come."

In addition to the spat donated by the Town of Brookhaven, the Friends of Bellport Bay will also be receiving approximately 30,000 seed oysters from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County (CCE) Marine program.

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